

HOLYOKE

'Not just another screen experience'

HCC launches online summer youth programs

Holyoke Community College is teaming up with the company Black Rocket to offer 12 weeks' worth of online summer programming for children 8 to 14 years old.

Registration is now open for HCC's Summer Youth Programs, which begin June 8 and run through the week of Aug. 24. HCC is not running its traditional on-campus summer youth programs this year because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"While the pandemic has upended all of our lives, HCC is still planning to offer an exciting, engaging array of summer programming for kids and teens," said Michele Cabral, HCC executive director of professional development and corporate learning,



An area boy designs a video game during one of Holyoke Community College's Summer Youth Programs. The remote classes are conducted in real-time via computer, with each focused on building creativity, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills through play.

who oversees HCC's Summer Youth Programs. "We want to keep kids safe and healthy, but we also want to offer them alternate way to engage with others — and learn. Through Black Rocket, kids will be able to learn coding, design video games, play eSports, create

YouTube videos and much more."

The remote classes are conducted in real-time via computer, with each focused on building creativity, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills through play.

"They are meant to be fun

as well as educational," said Cabral. "This is not just another screen experience."

Each of the Black Rocket programs runs three hours a day for five days.

Separately, but also starting June 8, HCC is running an online Youth Dungeons and Dragons Adventure Campaign, where players can challenge their imaginations, solve puzzles and navigate epic quests. This program will run one day a week for six weeks, with each session three hours long.

All programs cost \$149 each.

Cabral said HCC is also exploring opportunities to add other courses.

"If we can provide on-campus programs in a safe manner, we will announce those in coming weeks," said Cabral.

Updates, full course descriptions, computer requirements and registration information are available online at hcc.edu/summeryouth